

Influenza Vaccine for Health Care Personnel

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Health care providers are one of the priority groups recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to get immunized for influenza.

Achieving high vaccination coverage among health care providers will protect staff and patients, as well as reduce disease burden and health care costs. Despite the documented benefits of vaccination on absenteeism and patient outcomes, less than 50 percent get immunized.

Health care providers can acquire influenza from patients or transmit it to patients and other staff. Health care providers with underlying chronic medical conditions or who are pregnant are at increased risk for complications.

Influenza outbreaks in hospitals and long-term-care facilities have been associated with low vaccination rates among staff. Residents of facilities that care for sick, elderly and compromised persons are particularly vulnerable to influenza and related complications. Long term care facilities, assisted living, and retirement centers should strongly encourage all staff, including administrative, housekeeping, laundry and food service to be vaccinated.

Cost-effectiveness studies of adults up to 65 years indicated that vaccination can reduce both direct medical costs and indirect costs from employee absenteeism, resulting in 18 to 45 percent fewer lost work days and a 25 percent decrease in antibiotic use for ILI. Among healthy persons aged 18-64, vaccination can save an estimated \$60 to \$4,000 per illness.

Facilities that employ health care providers are strongly encouraged to provide vaccine to staff by combining publicity and education to combat fears and misconceptions about influenza vaccines. Educational programs should emphasize the benefits of vaccination for staff and patients. Organized campaigns that promote and make vaccine accessible can improve vaccination rates. Vaccination of senior medical staff or leaders has been associated with higher vaccination acceptance among staff members. Making vaccine readily accessible has been demonstrated to improve coverage rates.

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr55e209a1.htm>

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